

MEETING RECORD

NAME OF GROUP: Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING: Thursday, July 28, 2005, 8:00 a.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Members: Thomas Laging, V.J. Nelson, Patrick O'Donnell, Kim Todd and Jeff Searcy present. **Jim Hewitt and Karen Kilgarin absent.**

Others: Matt Metcalf (Davis Design); Bryon Boslau and Jim Dobler (Farmers Mutual of Nebraska); Rob Olson (Clark Enersen Partners); Tim Mettenbrink and Ross McCown (Nebco); Scott Wieskamp (Lincoln Public Schools); Diane Kann (Highnooners); Jeff Cole (Urban Development); Lynn Johnson and Terry Genrich (Parks and Recreation); Bob Ripley (Capitol Administration); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Dept.)

STATED PURPOSE OF THE MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Chair Jeff Searcy called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Approval of meeting notes of June 23, 2005

O'Donnell moved approval of the June 23, 2005, seconded by Laging. Laging, Nelson, O'Donnell and Searcy voting 'yes'; Hewitt, Kilgarin and Todd absent.

Application by Davis Design on behalf of Farmers Mutual Insurance Company for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of 1235 K Street and 525 S. 13th Street in the Capitol Environs District.

Searcy stated that this is a continuation of discussion from last month's meeting and will require action today.

Laging asked about the long-term plan of this site following demolition. Metcalf stated that they plan to build a new office building parallel to 13th Street, but plans have not been designed as of yet. They will request that the alley be vacated and the overhead utilities be re-routed underground.

Ripley asked what the reasoning is for tearing down two buildings prior to the new building being constructed. Davis stated that the K Street building is not a viable building as there has been a lot of water damage and is in poor condition structurally. He added that getting the alley vacated is a critical step and will take several months. They feel that it is also an issue of aesthetics. Dobler added that if they are not able to vacate the alley, they would not proceed with constructing a new building.

Laging asked if there is a historical value to the 13th Street building. Zimmer stated that he does not know of a justification for a historical landmark, although it is a positive contributor to the streetscape.

Laging asked if they have looked in to having a mixed-use development for this block, as he feels residential is viable in that area. Boslau stated that the general concept is to have nice campus for their offices as well as to lease a portion of it. Laging noted that he would not encourage a campus plan, but rather an urban plan. He added that he feels the loss of the small building would be unfortunate.

Ripley stated that demolishing these buildings will not add to the urban context. The buildings that define the edge of the streetscape add considerable value to the environs and the downtown as a whole.

Searcy noted that it is important to recognize that this company has come to the Commission every step of the way and has been forthright with their plans. Ripley stated that conversely, the Commission has been supportive of that approach and has granted permission for demolition of two buildings already.

Ripley stated that it his opinion is that it is more an issue of timing; he has no argument with the proposed building. He feels that demolition should occur just prior to construction of the new building.

O'Donnell stated that he does not have a problem with the demolition. He feels that the green space would be more attractive than the current buildings.

Laging moved to approve demolition of the 1235 K Street building and offer support for the relocation of the utilities and alley vacation, but the building at 525 S. 13th Street should be preserved until such time as a plan for further development of the site is presented; it was seconded by Nelson. Motion failed. Laging voting 'yes'; Nelson, O'Donnell, Searcy and Todd voting 'no'; Hewitt and Kilgarin absent.

Searcy asked how this motion would affect their plans. Metcalf stated that it will cause additional cost to the company due to two separate demolitions.

Todd stated that she does not see the point of supporting demolition of one building but not the other. She feels that prior to demolition a plan should be brought to the Commission for consideration.

Todd moved to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness contingent upon a conceptual plan being submitted to the Commission prior to demolition; it was seconded by Nelson. Motion carried. Nelson, O'Donnell, Searcy and Todd voting 'yes'; Laging voting 'no'; Hewitt and Kilgarin absent.

Application by NEBCO for a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition of 505 S. 12th Street in the Capitol Environs District.

Todd was absent during this agenda item discussion and action.

Mettenbrink stated that this carwas is a building whose time has past. It is now an empty building. They would like to demolish the building prior to any vandalism occurring. There is little to no redeeming value of this building to the downtown. In the interim, they would like to pave the area and use it for parking for the other two offices they have downtown. They intend to fully develop that block, and it would be of the quality of One Landmark Center.

Laging moved approval, seconded by O'Donnell. Motion carried. Laging, Nelson, O'Donnell and Searcy voting 'yes'; Hewitt, Kilgarin and Todd absent.

Landscape plan for McPhee School, South 15th Street between F and G Streets in the Capitol Environs District.

Scott Wieskamp of Lincoln Public Schools stated that a couple months ago he presented a landscape plan for McPhee School. It is being driven by the PTO for the north and east sides of the school. At that time, Ripley had expressed that the plan along the south Mall should conform to the landscape plan for the Mall. Wieskamp stated that if they were to implement this plan, it would strictly be in the LPS boundaries and would not conflict with the Mall plans. Kim Todd had also expressed that she would like to have one of her landscape classes at the University review and possibly re-design the plan and implement it next spring.

The Commission was supportive of the plan.

Sidewalk café recommendation for Highnooners, 1414 O Street.

Diane Kann stated that they would like to fence in a small area of the Highnooners restaurant and serve customers in an outdoor café.

Laging moved approval, seconded by Todd. Motion carried. Laging, Nelson, O'Donnell, Searcy and Todd voting 'yes'; Hewitt and Kilgarin absent.

Miscellaneous

Zimmer stated that landscape and dock work has begun at the new Noodles and Company building at 14th and Q Streets.

Todd stated that there is an automatic irrigation system being put in on the parking lot south of the capitol. She has a concern that it could kill the red oaks due to over-irrigation. She feels that the Commission should require that they meet the City screening requirements.

Nelson reported that the Near South Neighborhood Association is supportive of a portion of South 15th Street being re-named to Goodhue Boulevard.

Olson stated that they are here representing the Nebraska Department of Labor. They would like to put an addition on the back (northeast corner) of the former Alltel building on the southeast corner of 16th & K Streets. They requested to be on the agenda next month for the Commission's consideration of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Johnson informed the Commission that they hope to have some preliminary design development concepts for Centennial Mall on a block by block basis within a couple weeks.

There being no further business, Searcy adjourned the meeting at 9:12 a.m.